

Transitional Assistance Advisor-CT (TAA)
Written Testimony

FEBRUARY 3, 2009

Senator Andrew Maynard, Co-Chair
Representative Ted Graziani, Co-Chair
Honorable Members
Connecticut Select Committee on Veterans Affairs
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, Connecticut 06105

IN RE: Testimony in Support of Proposed Senate & House Bills (HB 5664, HB 5295, HB 5139, SB 119, SB 566)

My Name is Daniel McHale, I am a resident of Avon, CT, and I am the Transitional Assistance Advisor (TAA) for Connecticut. I am a contractor working for the Dept. of Defense, through the contract company SKYLINE. I am a Vietnam Veteran and have completed 35 years of military service with the Regular Army and the CTARNG. I retired in August of 2005 as a Senior Officer. I am also the AUSA, CT Chapter 1st Vice President and chair the Veterans Advisory Committee.

As a TAA, the program provides a person in each State or Territory to assist service members in accessing benefits and entitlements offered by community, state and federal resources. I facilitate entitlement and benefits briefings for returning Connecticut military, National Guard, Reserves and active duty military personnel and their families. **The TAA in each state is the "single point of contact" for Federal and State assets and resources that benefit all branches of the military community.**

(HB 5295) An act concerning additional pay for active service after September 11th, 2001.

I am continually asked about the Current Combat Zone Payment available to the Air and Army Guard. I find it very difficult and dishearting to have to tell a Marine or Reservist that even though they are a Connecticut resident, they are not eligible for the Tax free combat Zone payment. I have numerous parents that have several siblings in different branches of the military. Case in point: MAJ (Ret) Joseph Kiely, a Vietnam Vet and prior National Guards Officer that had two sons deployed at the same time: One in the 25th Marines out of Plainville in Falusa, Iraq and the other with the 102nd Infantry, in Afghanistan.

I briefed both units when they came home and had to tell his Father and the young Marine, that he wasn't eligible for the States Combat Zone Payment. I won't pass on the Father's comments, but the young Marine was very put off to say the least.

I briefed numerous reservists and their families that deployed; the 405th Combat Support Hospital (CSH) from West Hartford, the 25th Marines from Plainville, the 411th from

Danbury, and many others after they returned from combat. I accepted applications for the Connecticut War Time Service Medal but, had to refuse applications for the "CBT Zone" payment because, even though they are Connecticut residents and tax payers, they don't qualify for the payment because they are in the Reserves. I left the Armory with an empty feeling in my stomach.

The State employee that administers the CBT Zone payment and family Assistance program is a Lieutenant Colonel in the Reserves and recently returned from a tour in Afghanistan and he can't even apply for the Combat Zone Payment.

When I came home from Vietnam, the State of Connecticut gave me Three Hundred dollars for serving the state and the nation and I was in Federal Service. Please understand, I'm grateful that the National Guard receives the CBT Zone payment that was passed into legislation and then increased up to Twelve hundred Dollars. The CTARNG is the largest military in the State and is well deserving and lead the way with many deployments and continue to deploy in support of the War on Terrorism. They most of all deserve the every benefit and entitlement that is available. I and many others would like the Current Bill amended to include all of Connecticut's military that step forward and go into harms way.

(HB-5664) An act Concerning the awards of Ribbons and Medals to certain Veterans for service in time of War.

Laos Veterans of America, which includes 45,000 members through out the Country and Canada of which Connecticut's Chapter has approximately 30 to 40 members residing in Bridgeport, New Britain, Suffield, Bristol, Enfield, Manchester, Wallingford, New Haven, Danbury and several other towns through out the state.

During the Vietnam War, the Hmong and Lao Special Combat Units served under the direction of the United States Military and Clandestine forces in Laos. They fought courageously for over 10 years with the American Special Forces and Special Operations Units. The War you weren't supposed to talk about! These people bore the brunt of fighting against the North Vietnamese and the Communist Pathet Lao in a "Covert War". Their mission were to first rescue "downed American Air Crews and second to stop reinforcements of NVA troops and war supplies along the Ho Chi Minh trail. They served bravely and suffered great losses during the war. There were 35,000 to 40,000 killed in combat and 60,000 wounded or missing from 1960 to 1975.

All Connecticut members supported the US Army during the Viet Nam war. All of these veterans fought behind enemy lines along the Ho Chi Min trail in teams or as individuals. After the war most of the CT residents fled to this country as refugees. Approximately 30 individuals are members of the CT Chapter of AUSA (Association of the United States Army). They were granted a waiver for residency and Citizenship. They work in all types of Industry and support all Veteran and family functions. Many of their Siblings serve in the US Military and several are serving in Iraq.

They were awarded Congressional recognition in 1991. I would ask the Committee to support HB 5664 so these great warriors and patriots can be presented the Connecticut War Time Service Medal. The medals are already available and will be at no new cost to the State.

As the Transitional Assistance Advisor, for the record I would also like to state that I support:

HB 5139 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEDUCTABILITY OF VETERANS PENSIONS.

SB 119 AN ACT CONCERNING TUITION WAIVERS FOR VETERANS TAKING SUMMER AND INTERSESSION CLASSES AT PUBLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES COURSES to add "AND" for fee's and books as an amendment.

SB 566 AN ACT CONCERNING TUITION WAIVERS FOR CERTAIN VETERANS ENROLLED IN PUBLIC COLLEGES OR UNIVERSITIES. to add "AND" for fee's and books as an amendment.

I realize that not only the Country and the State are in the worst financial discord since the great depression and everyone will have to sacrifice, but no entity makes a bigger sacrifice than those who step forward and put their lives on the line for this State and Country. In closing -I would like to thank the committee and ask for the committee's support with the legislation regarding benefits supporting the military community.

Daniel J. McHale, BG (Ret-CT)
Transitional Assistance Advisor-CT
Room 214
360 Broad Street
Hartford CT. 06105
Off. 860-524-4908
Cell-860-748-0037
Fax: 860-548-3288
SKYLINE
Ultd, Inc.

"I feel that my life would have been empty and meaningless if I had not been able to be a Soldier".



ASSOCIATION OF THE
UNITED STATES ARMY

2425 WILSON BOULEVARD • ARLINGTON, VA 22201

LTC SAR PHOUTHASACK

IS A LOYAL MEMBER OF THIS ASSOCIATION

AUG 2002

AUG 2008

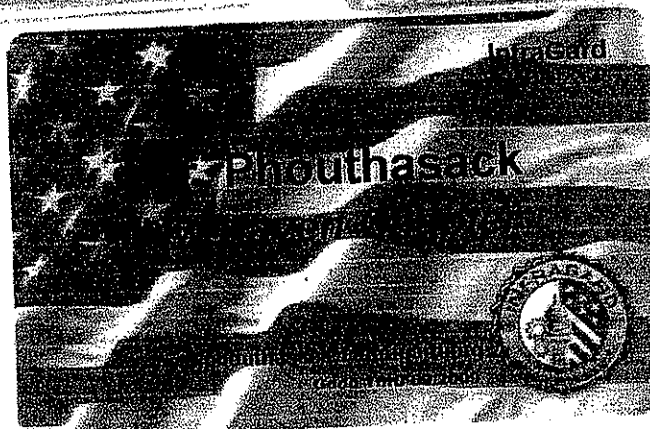
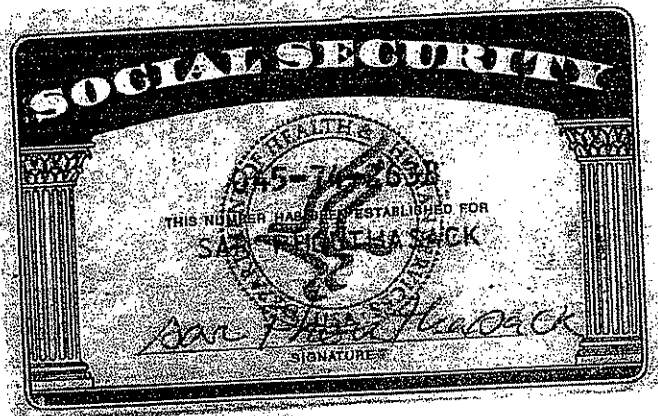
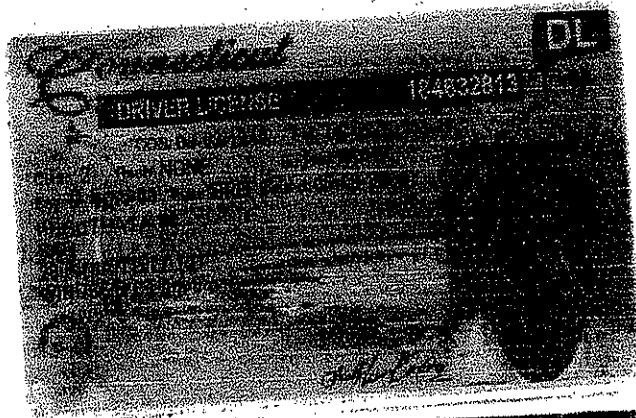
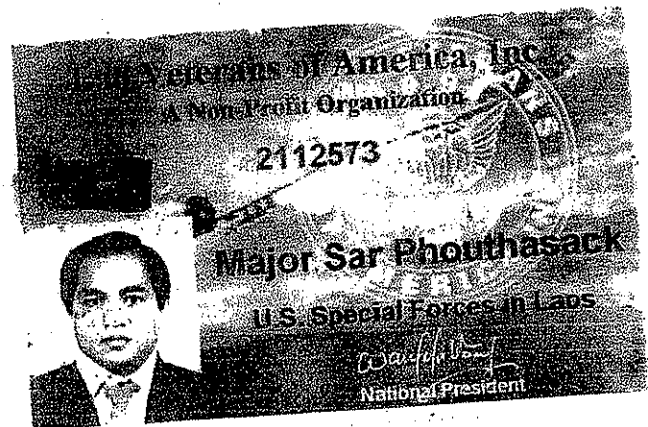
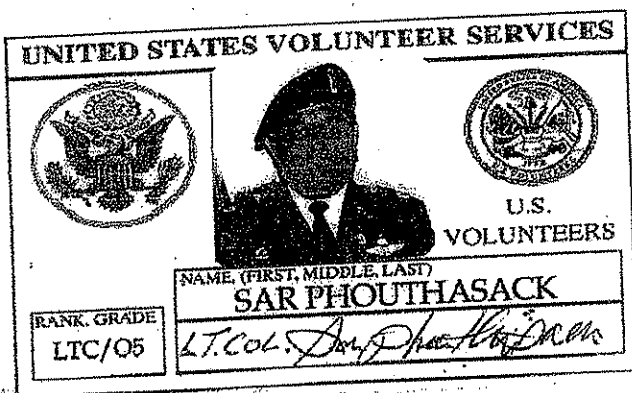
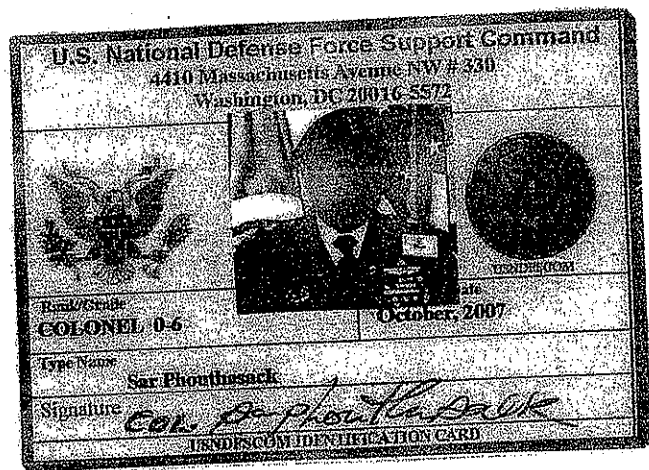
334627

MEMBER SINCE

EXPIRES

MEMBER NUMBER

Connecticut Chapter





SGU Veterans and Families of USA, INC.

A Non-Profit Organization

United States Volunteer USV.

Connecticut and New England Chapter

United States National Defense Force Support Command

(SEP) 1st Bde, 25th Civil Affairs Support Division (CASD)

28 Indian Hill, RD. Windsor, CT. 06095-1451

Tel. (860) 683-1829 Cell. (860) 836-2341, E-mail: sarp1942@yahoo.com



Military. Army, Special force – Ranger Airbone From 1960 – 1975
Served. U.S. Secret Army Vietnam War Service In Laos,
Mission. Special Combat Mission Behind Enemy Lines, Front Lines Combat
Respon. Chief of Commander Communication for 2nd Division, Recruits, Training, and
Supporting, to the front lines
Activity. In Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand.
Rank. COLONEL.

After Communist Took Over Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia; and worked for
US Consulate In Thailand From 1975 - 1983

COLONEL. Sar Phouthasack

President: of Lao SGU Veterans and families of USA, INC. CT. & New England
National: Vice President Lao SGU Veterans of USA, CT. & New England Chapter
1st Begade, 25th General Commanding Support Division (CASD) CT., NE.
Commander, 1st New England Brigade (USV)
Member, of Association of The United States Army
Member Of FBI. Infragard Security

"In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger."
—President John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, January 20, 1961.

In tribute to the Hmong and Lao special combat units that served under the direction of United States military and clandestine forces in Laos, we join the grateful people of America to award to you this

Commendation and Citation for Vietnam War Service in Laos

Maj. Sar Phouthasack ID. # 2112573

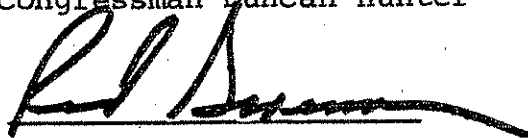
On this 14th day of May, 1997

For your courageous defense of your people and homeland against communist aggression and your support and sacrifice on behalf of the United States military and clandestine forces 1961-1975. Hmong and Lao special combat units operated in crucial air and ground operations for the United States military and clandestine forces, including the rescuing of downed air crews and the interdiction and destruction of enemy troop and supply convoys.

Now, therefore, on this 14th day of May, 1997, on the occasion of the Lao Veterans of America National Recognition Day ceremonies at the Vietnam War Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery, we salute your receipt of the Congressionally authorized Vietnam Veterans National Medal and we confer upon you and the other Hmong and Lao combat veterans this commendation and citation, and the long overdue recognition and honor you so rightly deserve for your sacrifices on behalf of the United States, Laos and the freedom loving people of Southeast Asia.



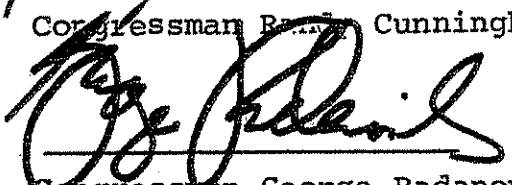
Congressman Duncan Hunter



Senator Rod Grams



Congressman Randy Cunningham



Congressman George Radanovich



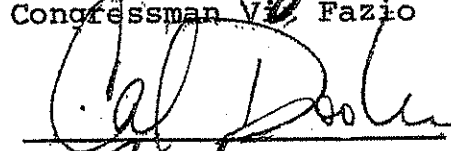
Congressman Dana Rohrabacher



Congressman Bill McCollum



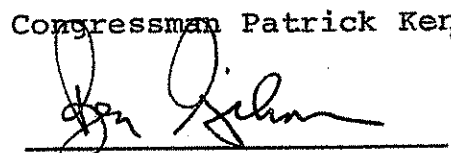
Congressman Vito Fazio



Congressman Cal Dooley



Congressman Patrick Kennedy



Congressman Ben Gilman

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

"A measure of the heroism and effectiveness of the Hmong struggle can be seen in the fact that the North Vietnamese forces arrayed against them increased over the years from the original 7,000 to 70,000, including several of North Vietnam's best divisions."

—Ambassador William Colby, Former CIA Director

In tribute to the Hmong and Lao special combat units that served in the
U.S. Secret Army in Laos, we join the grateful people of America
to award to you this

Commendation and Citation for
Vietnam War Service in Laos

to

MAJ. SAR PHOUTHASACK ID# 2112573
On this 14th day of May, 1998

For your courageous defense of your people and homeland against communist aggression, as well as your support and sacrifice on behalf of the United States military and clandestine forces, 1961-1975. Hmong and Lao members of the U.S. Secret Army fought in the Vietnam campaign in crucial air and ground operations as pilots, air crews and soldiers in support of Air America, the U.S. Air Force "Ravens" Program, U.S. Army Special Forces' White Star Teams and other American military efforts.

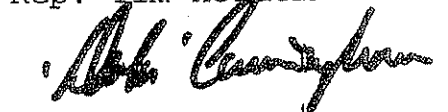
Now, therefore, on this 14th day of May, 1998, on the occasion of the Lao Veterans of America National Recognition Day ceremonies at the Vietnam War Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery, we salute your receipt of Vietnam War medals and we confer upon you and the other Hmong and Lao combat veterans this commendation and citation, and the long overdue recognition and honor you so rightly deserve for your sacrifices on behalf of the United States, Laos and the freedom loving people of Southeast Asia.



Rep. Dana Rohrabacher



Rep. Tim Holden



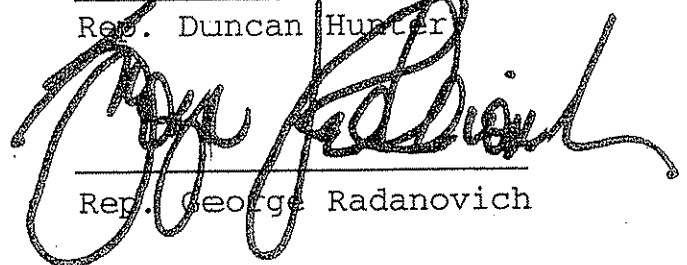
Rep. Randy Cunningham



Rep. Patrick Kennedy



Rep. Duncan Hunter



Rep. George Radanovich



Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20515

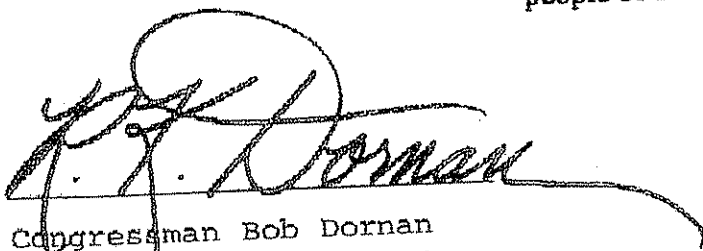
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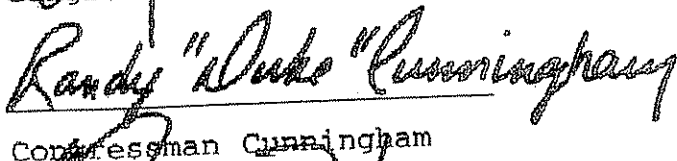
In tribute to Former CIA Director Ambassador William Colby and the United States military and clandestine forces who served in the Vietnam War, we join the grateful people of America to award to you this

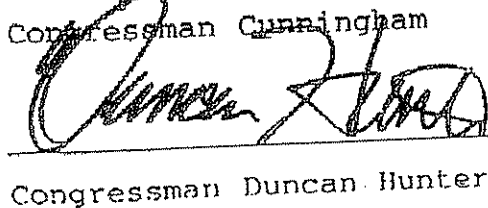
Commendation and Citation for
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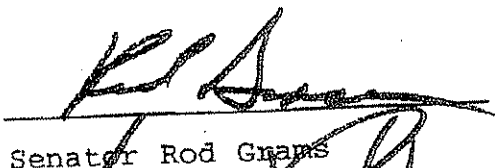
Major Sar to Phouthasack
On this 12th day of May, 1996

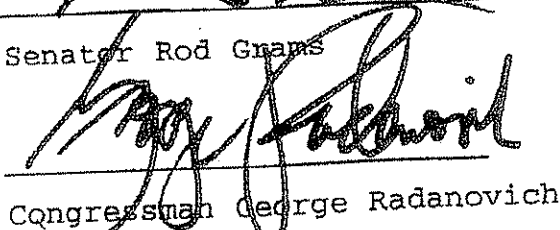
For your courageous defense of your people and homeland against communist aggression and your support and sacrifice on behalf of United States military and clandestine forces. Hmong and Lao units in the Royal Lao armed forces operated in crucial air and combat support missions for United States military and clandestine forces, including the rescuing of downed air crews and the interdiction and destruction of enemy troop and supply convoys. Against overwhelming enemy manpower and weaponry, the outnumbered Hmong and other Royal Lao forces successfully fought as allies of the United States to maintain the freedom of Laos and other Southeast Asian nations threatened by the invasion of the Soviet-backed, North Vietnamese Army. Now, therefore, on this 12th day of May, 1996, we confer upon you and the other Hmong and Lao combat veterans this commendation and citation and the long overdue recognition and honor you so rightly deserve for your sacrifices on behalf of the United States, Laos and the freedom loving people of Southeast Asia.

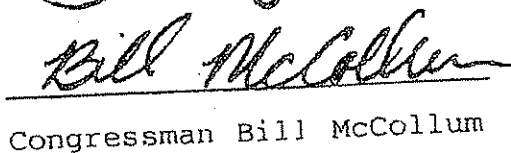

Congressman Bob Dornan

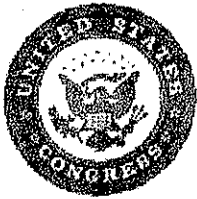

Congressman Cunningham


Congressman Duncan Hunter


Senator Rod Grams


Congressman George Radanovich


Congressman Bill McCollum



Commendation and Citation




Presented To

Maj. Sar Phouthasack # 2112573

In special recognition of the sacrifices and courage of Laotian and Hmong veterans of the U.S. "Secret Army" and their American advisors, who served freedom's cause in Southeast Asia.

We join the people of the United States and our nation in deepest gratitude to you for your crucial and historic contribution to the Kingdom of Laos and American national security during the Vietnam War.

We commend and honor you for your bravery and extraordinary efforts on behalf of United States military and clandestine forces during the Vietnam War.



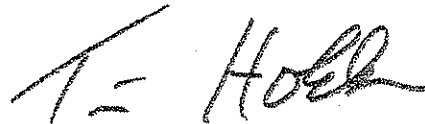
George Radanovich
Member of Congress



Dana Rohrabacher
Member of Congress



Mark Green
Member of Congress



Tim Holden
Member of Congress



CONSULATE OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

11 January 1983


TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter is to introduce and recommend Mr. Sar Phouthasack who has been a faithful and reliable employee of the United States Government for over 17 years. He worked in Laos until the communist takeover in 1975 and then in Thailand through December 1982. He has extensive experience in repairing and maintaining radio, television and other electronic equipment. Mr. Phouthasack also has over 8 years of supervisory experience and has been responsible for management of up to 20 indigenous personnel.

While working for the United States Government in Southeast Asia, Mr. Phouthasack demonstrated initiative, imagination and self-reliance. He has developed effective and productive management skills that have earned the confidence of his supervisors and respect of his subordinates. Mr. Phouthasack can be relied upon to perform with minimal supervision.

Mr. Phouthasack would still be a highly valued employee of the United States Government in Thailand had he not chosen to emigrate to the United States and seek employment in the private sector. Your consideration of Mr. Phouthasack's application would be greatly appreciated as he goes with our full blessing and belief that he will succeed in any endeavor if given the opportunity.

Sincerely,


George W. Kenning Jr.
Consul
Udon, Thailand

CHRISTOPHER J. DODD
CONNECTICUT



May 5, 2005

Lao Veterans of America
Connecticut & New England Chapter
c/o Major Sar Phouthasack
President

Dear Friends:

I write to extend my sincere appreciation for the service of Laotian and Hmong veterans who bravely fought alongside United States military and clandestine forces in the Kingdom of Laos.

Laotian and Hmong units performed vital operations during the Vietnam War to protect United States troops, rescue American pilots, and defend the people of Laos.

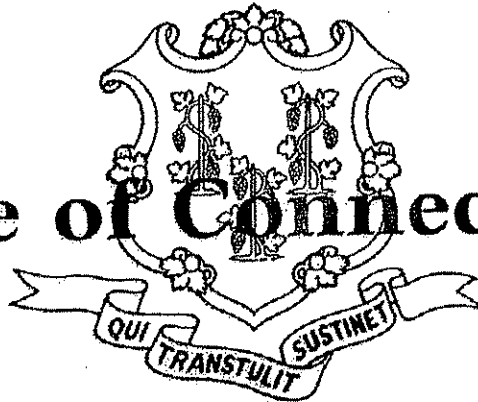
The United States honors your sacrifices on behalf of our armed forces, and I commend you for your contributions to United States led efforts overseas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Chris. J. Dodd", written over the printed name.

CHRISTOPHER J. DODD
United States Senator

State of Connecticut



General Assembly Official Citation

Introduced by REPRESENTATIVE MELODY A. CURREY, 10TH DISTRICT
REPRESENTATIVE MICHAEL A. CHRIST, 11TH DISTRICT
REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD DECKER, 9TH DISTRICT
SENATOR GARY CEBEAM, 3RD DISTRICT

Be it hereby known to all that:
The Connecticut General Assembly
hereby offers its sincerest congratulations to:

MEMBERS OF THE LAO VETERANS OF AMERICA, INC.
CONNECTICUT AND NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER

in recognition of

YOUR DEDICATION TO YOUR PEOPLE AND TO THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT.
CONGRATULATIONS ON DEVELOPING YOUR ORGANIZATION.

The entire membership extends its
very best wishes on this memorable occasion
and expresses the hope for continued success.

Given this 31ST day of MAY 19 98

at the State Capitol

Hartford, Connecticut

by

Kevin B. Gallus
President Pro Tempore

Thomas O. Pett
Speaker of the House

William J. Pappe
Secretary of the State

